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AUTHOR Shermis, Michael
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ABSTRACT

This annotated bibliography contains 26 references on writing apprehension found in the ERIC database. The bibliography contains citations from the period between 1985 and 1989 and is divided into four sections. The first section lists sources of teaching ideas. Citations in the second section deal with the use of computers in alleviating writing apprehension. Articles and papers in the third section discuss writing apprehension in students with special needs. The last section presents references dealing with the latest research on writing anxiety. (MS)

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Writing Apprehension

by Michael Shermis

Instructors of students experiencing writing apprehension can always use new strategies to put their students at ease. A search of the ERIC database produced the following citations on writing apprehension, all from the period 1985 to 1989. The first section lists sources of teaching ideas. Citations in the second section deal with the use of computers in alleviating writing apprehension. Articles and papers in the third section discuss writing apprehension in students with special needs. The last section presents references to the latest research on writing anxiety.

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Instructional Strategies

Hulce, Jim. "Dewriting: Breaking into Writing," *Exercise Exchange,* v32 n2 p7-9 Spr 1987.

Suggests motivating writing apprehensive students by asking them to "remodel" passages from novels, magazines, or newspapers that have been stripped of details, descriptions, and compound sentences.

Keller, Rodney D. "The Rhetorical Cycle: Reading, Thinking, Speaking, Listening, Discussing, Writing." Paper presented at the 36th Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, 1985. 13p. [ED 257 099]

The rhetorical cycle is a step-by-step approach that provides classroom experience before students actually write, thereby making the writing process less frustrating for them. This approach consists of six sequential steps: reading, thinking, speaking, listening, discussing, and finally writing.

McGee, Patrick. "Truth and Resistance: Teaching as a Form of Analysis," *College English,* v49 n6 p667-78 Oct 1987.

Draws a parallel between the resistance experienced by a patient in psychoanalysis and the resistance expressed by students in composition or literature courses.

Perdue, Virginia. "Confidence vs. Authority: Visions of the Writer in Rhetorical Theory." Paper presented at the 38th Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, 1987. 15p. [ED 280 058]

By building up the confidence of student writers, writing teachers hope to reduce the hostility and anxiety so often found in authoritarian introductory college composition classes. Process oriented writing theory implicitly defines confidence as a wholly personal quality resulting from students' discovery that they do have "something to say" to readers. However, the social dimension of the writing act is lost in such a formulation. Peer group revision, journal writing, portfolios of student writing samples, and revision after turning in the paper are all methods that build personal confidence and social authority—all help dilute the concentration of authority in the teacher and give students a stake in what goes on both in the classroom and in their own writing.

Ruszkiewicz, John J. "Assuming Success: The Student Writer as Apprentice," *Freshman English News*, v15 n3 p13-15 Win 1987.

Advocates teachers' belief in students' ability to achieve writing success, rather than assuming failure that results in a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Silver, Kathi O. "The Extended Conference: A Technique to Encourage Writing," *English Journal*, v78 n1 p24-27 Jan 1989.

Describes a combined process writing approach and extended conference method of writing instruction applied to eighth grade students. Presents the experiences of several students who refused to write at first but soon became proud of their writing after several extended conferences.

Tighe, Mary Ann. "Reducing Writing Apprehension in English Classes." Paper presented at the 6th Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English Spring Conference, 1987. 18p. [ED 281 196]

In an effort to reduce student writing apprehension, an informal, in-class study was conducted in a lower-level college writing course at an Alabama university. Throughout the course, all writing was based on student experiences and came from student journals, all assignments were completed in class and reviewed in small group discussions, and specific criteria from a rating scale used to evaluate student essays were discussed. Findings from these observations and Writing Apprehension Test (WAT) posttest scores indicated that 13 students were less apprehensive about their writing after the course than before it. In addition, results showed that students wrote more in their later essays, suggesting a greater willingness to commit themselves on paper.

Unger, Brian. "Operation Extermination: How to Deal with Writer's Apprehension," *Highway One*, v9 n3 p29-33 Fall 1986.

Offers a test for identifying students with writing apprehension and offers strategies for dealing with these students.

Computers and Writing Instruction

Herrmann, Andrea W. "Teaching Teachers to Use Computers as Writing Tools," *English Education*, v20 n4 p215-29 Dec 1988.

Describes an ethnographic study of an in-service graduate course designed to help teachers use computers to teach writing and other skills to the academically able. Claims the course significantly reduced teachers' computer anxiety and their writing apprehension.

Le, Thao. "Computers as Partners in Writing: A Linguistic Perspective," *Journal of Reading* v32 n7 p606-10 Apr 1989.

Argues that computers can be useful partners in the writing process even for reluctant or poor writers. Describes from a linguistic perspective factors that help explain why writing is a difficult task and briefly describes several computer programs which are based on such factors.

Teichman, Milton; Poris, Marilyn. *Wordprocessing in the Classroom: Its Effects on Freshman Writers.* 1985. 59p. [ED 276 062]

To learn more about the impact of word processing on the writing of college freshmen, a study investigated several aspects of how using word processing affects the writing process, including whether word processing affects writing anxiety. Findings showed that using computers significantly reduced writing apprehension while also increasing a student's ability to recognize standard written English.

Teichman, Milton; Poris, Marilyn. "Initial Effects of Word Processing on Writing Quality and Writing Anxiety of Freshman Writers." Paper presented at the 39th Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, 1988. 33p. [ED 294 217]

Examines the initial effects of word processing on essay-writing performance and on writing apprehension. Eighty students wrote essays using terminals linked to a mainframe computer (experimental group), while another 80 students wrote essays in the traditional mode using pens, pencils, or typewriters (control group). Finds that the experimental group made greater progress than the control group from the pre- to post-essay test, but the same group did not demonstrate superior performance on the six required essays of the course. For writing apprehension, there was no significant difference between the two groups.

Varner, Iris I.; Grogg, Patricia Marcum. "Microcomputers and the Writing Process," *Journal of Business Communication*, v25 n3 p69-78 Sum 1988.

Assesses the microcomputer's effects on the process and quality of business writing, focusing on writing anxiety, computer anxiety, time spent in writing, writing quality, and the relationship of gender to these variables. Concludes that the most significant predictor of quality is initial writing ability.

Special Needs Students

Baxter, Barbara. "Basic Writing: Breaking through the Barriers of Apathy and Fear." Paper presented at the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Conference on English in the Two-Year College, 1987. 13p. [ED 286 202]

When students have difficulty writing, it is often because they are apathetic or afraid of failing, rather than because of a serious lack of skill. Basic writing teachers must break through student apathy and fear before the students can make progress. There are several methods to help students to regard writing as a conquerable skill, providing them with the impetus for further self-directed learning.

Betancourt, Francisco; Phinney, Marianne. "Sources of Writing Block in Bilingual Writers," *Written Communication*, v5 n9 p461-78 Oct 1988.

Presents findings of a descriptive study designed to compare instances of writer's block in English and Spanish, among and within three groups of bilingual writers. Tries to determine if the same writing factors stymie both the novice bilingual writer and the practiced bilingual writer. Suggests ways to lessen writing apprehension.

Brown, Stuart; and others. "Reading-Writing Connections: College Freshman Basic Writers' Apprehension and Achievement." Paper presented at the 37th Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, 1986. 18p. [ED 274 965]

Focusing on the relationships between performance, skills, and attitudes, a study conducted at the University of Arizona measured the effects of reading and writing apprehension on basic writers. Results suggested that the course, designed to equip students with strategies for composing, helped students gain the confidence necessary to increase writing skill.

Wolcott, Willa; Buhr, Dianne. "Attitude as It Affects Developmental Writers' Essays," *Journal of Basic Writing*, v6 n2 p3-15 Fall 1987.

Explores developmental students' attitudes toward writing as a reflection of their writing performance. Finds that the skills of students with positive attitudes toward writing improved significantly more than did those of students with neutral or negative attitudes. Includes a student writing attitude questionnaire and a questionnaire analysis sheet.

Recent Research

Aikman, Carol C. "Writing Anxiety—Barrier to Success." Paper presented at the National Adult Education Conference, 1985. 12p. [ED 262 191]

Research into writing anxiety is an off-shoot of research into oral communication anxiety. At first, researchers thought that people with high oral communication anxiety tended to compensate by writing. However, when the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test was used, it was found that the link between oral and written anxiety did not exist. Recent research is leading to the conclusion that anxiety is not the real culprit behind poor writing but is only a component of a negative attitude about writing. Writing may be improved by a change in the perceptions of the teacher/evaluator about writing attitudes. One of the ways to counteract writing anxiety is to improve the skills of the writer. Writing skills improvement courses in schools and work settings should be taught in nontraditional ways, and evaluation by teachers should be reduced, substituting peer or self-evaluation when possible.

Allen, Jeanne Vasterling. "Student Writing Apprehension: A Psychotherapeutic Approach." Paper presented at the Meeting of the Basic Writing Conference, 1985. 31p. [ED 270 793]

Writing apprehension needs to be understood, and solutions found for it, so that students' fears can be lessened and their success with writing increased. Carl Roger's client-centered, nondirective psychotherapy applies well to teaching composition. This approach was utilized in a class of freshman composition students in order to determine the degree of attitude improvement during one semester. Results indicated that it does not necessarily reduce writing apprehension, and that writing apprehension tests need to be given at the beginning of a course to identify fearful students so they can be helped.

Bennett, Kaye; Rhodes, Steven C. "Writing Apprehension and Writing Intensity in Business and Industry," *Journal of Business Communication,* v25 n1 p25-39 1988.

Tests the hypothesis that high writing-apprehensive subjects would differ significantly from low writing-apprehensive subjects regarding the writing intensity of their jobs. Suggests that where a lack of writing productivity exists in writing-intensive jobs, managers might explore writing-apprehension problems, or at least examine the match between levels of apprehension and writing requirements.

Bizarro, Patrick; Toler, Hope. "The Effects of Writing Apprehension on the Teaching Behaviors of Writing Center Tutors," *Writing Center Journal,* v7 n1 p37-43 Fall-Win 1986.

Reports on a study of writing apprehension in writing center tutors, results of which indicated a strong correspondence between various dimensions of writing apprehension and specific teaching behaviors that do not aid the student in problem detection or writing improvement.

Donlan, Dan. "When Teacher-Researchers Compare Notes on Writing Apprehension," *English Journal,* v75 n5 p87-89 Sep 1986.

Outlines research done by teachers on writing apprehension and concludes that teachers are natural researchers because they continually pose questions about the nature of their students and the effectiveness of their teaching.

Donlan, Dan; Andreatta, Sylvia. "Determining the Independence of Dispositional and Situational Writing Apprehension." Paper presented at the 6th Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English Spring Conference, 1987. 15p. [ED 279 023]

To determine whether teacher intervention in the form of experimentally manipulated variables would significantly change the level of students' dispositional writing apprehension, a study evaluated the effects of two classroom interventions—one apprehension-producing (AP) and one apprehension-reducing (AR). Findings showed that (1) the growth scores in the AP group were significantly different from those in the AR group; (2) the number of students experiencing decreased dispositional apprehension was significantly higher in the AR group than in the AP group; and (3) the number of students experiencing an increase in dispositional apprehension was significantly higher in the AP group than in the AR group.

Hollandsworth, Lindap. "How Personality and Background Affect Writing Attitudes." 1988. 32p. [ED 296 336]

Examines the effects of background and personality on the attitudes of developing writers. Finds a significant correlation between writers' attitudes and their personality traits, writing apprehension, and writing background.

McLeod, Susan. "Some Thoughts about Feelings: The Affective Domain and the Writing Process," *College Composition and Communication,* v38 n4 p426-34 Dec 1987.

Presents three broad areas—writing anxiety, motivation, and beliefs—that seem to be ripe for study in terms of affect, and suggests that the constructivist views refined by George Mandler could be helpful to drive such research.

Rose, Mike, ed. *When a Writer Can't Write: Studies in Writer's Block and Other Composing-Process Problems. Perspectives in Writing Research Series.* The Guilford Press, 200 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10003, 1985. ($30.00) 272p. [ED 264 590; document not available from EDRS]

The essays in this book address various cognitive and emotional dimensions of disrupted composing and describe some of the situational variables that can contribute to it. Includes the following essays: "Blocking and the Young Writer";

"Emotional Scenarios in the Writing Process: An Examination of Young Writers' Affective Experiences"; "Writing Apprehension"; "An Apprehensive Writer Composes"; "Problems with Monitor Use in Second Language Composing"; "Anxious Writers in Context: Graduate School and Beyond"; "Inventing the University"; "Diagnosing Writing-Process Problems: A Pedagogical Application of Speaking-Aloud Protocol Analysis"; "Psychotherapies for Writing Blocks"; "The Essential Delay: When Writer's Block Isn't"; and "Complexity, Rigor, Evolving Method, and the Puzzle of Writer's Block: Thoughts on Composing-Process Research."

ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills
Indiana University
Smith Research Center
2805 East Tenth Street
Bloomington, IN 47408
(812) 855-5847

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